

California State Parks, Statewide Trails Section
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April 9, 2008

To: Maryanne Vancio, Laura Zabkar, John Mercurio, Greg Gandrud, Jeannie Gillen

I write this letter to bring attention to the issue of proposed Coastal Trail monies to be used for the Glass Beach Trail at MacKerricher State Park in Mendocino County. There are serious reservations about moving so quickly forward with this project. It is evident that proceeding with trail planning and implementation before addressing certain aspects of the site will result in lack of compliance with several state and federal mandates (see the Biological Resources section of the State Parks Report for Glass Beach).

The presence of a Federally endangered plant at Glass Beach Headlands requires an Environmental Impact Report and there are State-listed Threatened plants at the site that have not been thoroughly mapped. In addition, it does not take an environmental scientist to see that the site is over run with invasive plants. If there were not such a rush to use the money, basic land management practices would normally focus on invasive plant removal and mapping of native plant and animal communities before proceeding with trail emplacement.

The location and type of trail is vitally important at this site because soils along the headlands at Glass Beach are highly vulnerable to erosion (from natural and man-made causes). The proposed installation of a road-base gravel trail in an unstable marine terrace environment of "perched dunes" flies in the face of rational management practices. It is short-sighted to not realize that a trail of foreign rock material on sandy soils will need continual funded maintenance to stay even remotely in place, let alone that it will bring immediate harm to the surrounding natural environment.

Please reevaluate plans for this site. Coastal Trail money can still be used, for instance, sections of boardwalk (reportedly more expensive) could be placed across wetland areas and adjacent to areas with rare plants. A gravel or paved path (as currently exists north of the trestle) could be placed adjacent to Glass Beach Road so as to continue the trail southward uninterrupted. This would leave the dirt trails in place in a manner similar to that north of the trestle at least until rare plants and communities are mapped and invasive plants are removed from the site.



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